



PRIME MINISTER

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E & O E - PROOF ONLY

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, the by-election, not a good result in Thomastown.

PM: We said before the election that there'd be a pretty substantial swing. But they, as I think everyone acknowledges, they'd been state issues. The real issues of the federal election are the ones I've been talking about in here. They are the ones that people will be voting on. The future of Medicare was not an issue out in Thomastown but it will be in the federal election. The question of whether people are going to have a universal and fair health system or put into Government people who have lied to the Australian electorate now for months and months saying they had a health policy ready and now saying they haven't. All they've got is a promise of a further bill of something like \$2.6B that they'll slap upon the Australian people. Those are the real issues.

JOURNALIST: But it can't help you, Prime Minister?

PM: Do I look terribly upset?

JOURNALIST: Do you have any fears that the swing will extend to federally?

PM: No. The answer I've given answers that.

JOURNALIST: Is Mr Hewson looking good as Opposition Leader?

PM: Well the hurdy gurdy goes on and on, doesn't it. The hurdy gurdy goes on and on.

JOURNALIST: In the debate against Mr Peacock how do you think you'll go?

PM: All I've said is at a press conference the other day "will it be Mr Peacock?"

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